

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please amend the specification as follows:

Page 2 of the specification, first full paragraph, please amend as follows:

The image information encoding apparatus 100 and the image information decoding apparatus 120 which have been explained above are disclosed in, e.g., ~~the~~ Published Japanese Patent Application Laid Open No. 2003-023637 ~~2001-199818~~ ~~publication and the Japanese Patent Application Laid Open No. 2002-20953~~ publication.